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302 other hair on the face, except that of the eyebrows and eyelids. The growth of beard was not liked and the hair was pulled out with the aid of two small thin sticks, between which they pinched it and plucked it out. A small stick of wood which had been partially split was also used for that purpose. Certain wood ashes were rubbed into the skin to check the growth. Now light beards and mustaches are sometimes met with.

DEFORMATION OF BODY

304 HEAD.—Head deformation (M.: *lal tasta dawkaya;* T., P.: *tus labanin;* U.: *tun labanaka*) was until quite recently practiced by all the Sumu tribes except the Bawihka. The little child was placed in a sort of cradle (M.: *kukaná;* T.: *pala;* P., U.: *lim*), which was suspended by means of bast-fiber ropes attached to the roof, so that it could be swung like a hammock. A folding flap of wood or of the "bratara" reed at the top of the cradle was tied firmly to the crown of the head, a thick layer of cotton being applied to prevent injury. The infant was kept in sitting position and secured in the cradle in such a manner that it could not move the head at all. From time to time the bandages and the folding flap were removed in order to allow the child a little freedom. The mother suckled her baby without unswathing it from the board. The object was to flatten the top of the head, as the ordinary-shaped head was considered ugly. Some Indians told me that they did not like to have such a round head as a monkey. Grossmann (b: 4) states, however, that the head was flattened in order to adapt it to the broad, flat cap which is worn at festivals. As the Sumu wear the hair hanging square cut to the eyebrows in front, the peculiar flatness of the skull may escape the casual observer.

[304]

At the present time this practice has been abandoned altogether and the cradles have been replaced by hammocks. The first mention of head deformation among the Sumu appears to have been made by M. W. (304, 305, 307). A short description thereof as practiced by the Ulwa of Rio Escondido is given by Collinson (b: 149–150). The Miskito claim to have never practiced head deformation and they call the Sumu derisively *Lal-tasta* "Flat-head," which word corresponds to the Spanish "Chatos" found in the old documents. One of the early writers claims, however, to have observed the custom among the Miskito of Sandy Bay in 1709;[20] it is very likely that the Indians in question were Sumu slaves.

[20] Estos monstruos de las cabezas chatas tienen la costumbre de entablillarles a las criaturas cuando nacen, y en creciendo les falta la faccion de la frente, sin distancia alguna del pelo de la cabeza a los de las cejas, que les hace imponderablemente horribles (Alcedo y Herrera: p. XVIII).

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HOUSEHOLD FURNISHINGS

352 BEDS AND TABLES.—The primitive Indian bed, which has practically disappeared, consisted merely of a layer of tree bark, Heliconia leaves, or deer skin, spread on the ground; it is known among the Miskito by the name *puklak taya* "balsa tree bark," while the Sumu call it *takal* (T., P.) and *lim* (U.).

Nowadays stages of split bamboo serve indiscriminately as beds and tables. These structures (M.: *kribri;* S.: *kirikiri*) are raised about 3 feet from the ground and are supported by four strong posts. Instead of sheets of bamboo the whole may be covered with wild cane sticks. Sheets of pounded tree bark serve as blankets
513 and as bed sheets (M.: *nina-pala, wunta-pala;* T., P.: *daŝ-rina;* U.: *daŝ-paknak*); in Honduras the Miskito also use mats (*tuasi*) made from a rush growing around the swamps and lagoons. Pillows (M.: *tilar*, corrupted from the English; S.: *tunana*) are stuffed with cotton
[834] or the fiber surrounding the seeds of the silk cotton and of the balsa trees. The Miskito living at the mouth of Rio Patuca slice the upper part of the stem of the small "palmetto" palm, which grows in the neighborhood, and use the thin flakes to stuff pillows and mattresses.
[439] The mosquito nets, called *pabulo* by both tribes, are made of opaque cotton sheeting of foreign manufacture, so that each bed forms practically a separate compartment.

HAMMOCKS.—While at home, hammocks (M.: *silmika;* S.: *wak*) are seldom used during the night, and then only by unmarried boys and girls. They are, however, carried along on long journeys. During the day the men dream away much time in the hammocks, but the women use them rarely. They may be made of cotton, tree bark, or Bromelia fibers.

● 857 CRADLES.—In former days cradles (M.: *kukaŝ;* T., P.: *pala;* U.: *lim*) were used by the Sumu in connection with the habit of flattening the heads of babies. (See under Deformation of body.) Since this practice has gone out of use cradles have disappeared entirely and small hammocks are now used for the children. The dried claws of crabs and other objects were tied to the cradle, making a strange rattling noise at each movement.

352 STOOLS.—Low wooden stools (M.: *sulasi;* T., P.: *sini;* U.: *panba*) with three or four legs and a flat or concave surface, hewn from solid blocks of wood, are used by the women, unless they sit directly on the ground. They may be square or oblong and suggest the stone metates found in the ancient sites. They range in size from diminutive forms used as toys by the children to benches of over 3 feet in length. When a stranger arrives at the Indian hut one of these seats or a hammock will immediately be offered to him.

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826 heard the peculiar sound produced by two trees rubbing against each other during high wind.

842 STERILITY AND ABORTION.—Sterility is considered a disgrace, and the average husband will abandon his wife if she is unable to bear [847] children. Abortion and prevention of pregnancy are accomplished by the use of certain herbs. In general the Indian woman is very pro- [165] lific, but infant mortality is also very high.

847 INFANTICIDE.—In former days babies of the female sex were often exposed and left to die, as they were supposed to bring ill luck. Male children are always received with great joy, which the father manifests by shooting off his gun. Deformed children were buried alive in olden days, as they were supposed to be possessed by an evil spirit, or to have been begotten by such one. A similar belief is held by many other tribes in both Americas and accounts for the total absence or scarcity of crippled persons in such regions.

847 Twins were also exposed, as they were said to be a proof of the wife's disloyalty to her husband; the latter considered that only one 845 of the two infants could possibly be his. If twins were of different sex the female was always killed. Lehmann (c: I, 405) states among the Miskito the red dog (*pŭhau*) is the master of the twins, and that for that reason these Indians whip dogs at the birth of twins (*pŭhauki*), but this report needs confirmation.

● 854 CHILD CARRYING.—The women carry their children in a long cloth which they sling over the back, tying the two ends together in front at the breast. This way the mother is not prevented from following her usual occupation, as both her hands are left free, while the child is firmly secured in a safe and comfortable position. The prevalence [142] of bowlegs among these Indians may possibly be ascribed to this manner of carrying the infants.

855 CARE OF CHILDREN.—The Indian child receives little attention from its parents, yet it rarely cries. The parents have, however, great patience toward their offspring, and they seldom chastise a naughty child. Should they, however, lose their patience and seize the whip, they may administer fearful beatings, but such cases are extremely rare. Lullaby songs are rarely heard, but the parents tell their offspring fables, legends, and fairy tales.

862 The last child is not generally weaned until the fourth year and sometimes even longer. I have observed cases among the Miskito where the young boys alternated their mother's breast with their father's tobacco pipe.

868 EDUCATION.—As the child grows up it is made acquainted with the occupations of its parents. The boy accompanies his father on hunting and fishing journeys as soon as he is strong enough to do so. The father makes toys for him, as diminutive canoes and paddles; later he obtains small bows and arrows in order to practice shooting at birds